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United in Adversity?

The Europeanisation of EU Concertation Practices in a More Divided UN Security Council

Hugo Nunes da Silva



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About the Author

Hugo Nunes da Silva holds a Master of Arts in Transatlantic Affairs, jointly delivered by The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (Medford, MA, United States) and the College of Europe (Bruges, Belgium). He has previously obtained a French Law Bachelor degree and Master's degrees in International Relations and European Union Law from the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Rennes, Paris-Sorbonne University and Paris Panthéon-Assas University, in addition to obtaining the *Agrégation d'Economie-Gestion*. He also interned at the French and EU representations to the United Nations in New York in 2015 and 2018, respectively, and will join the EU Delegation in Togo as Junior Professional and Programme Officer in September 2019. This paper is based on the Master's thesis he wrote in the framework of the joint MA in Transatlantic Affairs (Benjamin Franklin Class).

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Abstract

From China's and Russia's assertiveness to Donald Trump's 'America First' policies, the 2010s have seen a return of geopolitics that challenges the European Union (EU) to its core. In this context, this paper investigates how the resurgence of geopolitical adversity has impacted EU concertation in a forum where foreign policy integration had long seemed impossible: the UN Security Council (UNSC). Drawing on a series of over 40 interviews, amongst other sources, it argues that increased geopolitical rivalries have fostered partial Europeanisation processes in the UNSC, as evidenced by the strengthening of institutionalised concertation practices and the construction and diffusion of new cooperation formats such as EU8 joint statements. This development being constrained by enduring limits to cooperation and the odds of Brexit, this paper identifies policy recommendations to further advance Europeanisation processes in the UNSC, while circumstances continue to favour EU cooperation in New York.

Introduction: adversity, a key to the last lock on EU foreign policy integration?

Almost never in its history has the European Union (EU) been confronted with such adversities. For over ten years, the world's most prosperous trading bloc has faced a multi-faceted domestic crisis – a financial meltdown and economic slowdown, a migration crisis, a populist wave, and Brexit – to which mounting external challenges have added unprecedented pressure.¹ In the midst of the 'return of geopolitics' initiated by Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, and sustained by China's rising assertiveness, Donald J. Trump's election as President of the United States (US) on 9 November 2016 has opened yet another foreign policy challenge to the EU.²

International peace and security issues – which mostly fall under the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) – rank high among sources of contention. While tensions escalated in the Near East after the Trump Administration adopted a stronger pro-Israeli stance, the Syrian civil war continues to display the clashing geopolitical ambitions of Western democracies, Russia and regional players like Turkey and Iran.³ At the same time, the US distanced itself from other signatories of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in its assessment of the threat posed by Iran's nuclear programme.⁴ As other geopolitical rivalries unfold elsewhere, for instance in Ukraine and Venezuela, the EU is faced with increasing levels of adversity, not only with regard to Russia and China but also its longstanding American partner.

In such times, adversity becomes an opportunity for stronger European unity, including in the realm of international peace and security.⁵ Major external challenges had already fostered European foreign policy in the past, with the gradual consolidation of the EU's CFSP after 1992.⁶ Historically, however, European cooperation has remained extremely limited in the institution in charge of the maintenance of

¹ See, for instance, M. Castells *et al.* (eds.), *Europe's Crises*, Cambridge, Polity, 2017.

² W.R. Meade, "The Return of Geopolitics – The Revenge of the Revisionist Powers", *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2014; M. Landler, "Trump, the Insurgent, Breaks with 70 Years of American Foreign Policy", *New York Times*, 28 December 2017.

³ B. Didier, "The Syrian Conflict and Russia's Search for Regional Hegemony in a Contested Middle East: Implications for the Euro-Atlantic Community", *EU Diplomacy Paper*, no. 10, Bruges, College of Europe, 2017.

⁴ K. Kausch, "Balancing Trumpism: Transatlantic Divergence in the Middle East", *Orient*, vol. 60, 2018, pp. 16-25.

⁵ See, for instance, G. Paravicini, "Angela Merkel: Europe must take 'our fate' into own hands", *Politico*, 28 May 2017.

⁶ S. Keukeleire & T. Delreux, *The Foreign Policy of the EU*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, 2nd edition, pp. 42-47.

international peace and security – the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) – as a result of French and British efforts to shelter their privileged position as veto-holding permanent members of the UNSC, alongside Russia, the US, and China.⁷ Notwithstanding the Lisbon Treaty's restrictive definition of EU cooperation in the UNSC,⁸ dynamics now seem to be shifting, as evidenced by the presence of five EU members (Belgium, France, Germany, Poland, the UK) in 2019, French-German 'twin presidencies' in March and April 2019, and the multiplication of joint statements by former, current and incoming EU members of the UNSC since 2017.⁹ High Representative Mogherini herself noted in the UNSC that she was "proud to be there at a time [...] when cooperation and coordination between EU member states within the Security Council has enormously stepped up".¹⁰

This paper therefore aims to analyse the impact of on-going international tensions on EU cooperation in the UNSC and to assess emerging concertation practices. In other words, how has the resurgence of geopolitical adversity impacted EU concertation in the UNSC? The rise of geopolitical adversity has made the ground fertile for the partial Europeanisation of concertation practices in the UNSC. This development remains constrained by enduring limits to cooperation and the odds of Brexit; the relevant EU stakeholders should thus institutionalise the enhanced cooperation practices while international and European dynamics are conducive to new foreign policy initiatives.

The development of European concertation practices in the UNSC can indeed be analysed as an occurrence of Europeanisation, defined by Radaelli as "[p]rocesses of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures [...] which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU public

⁷ See, for instance, M. Rasch (ed.), *The European Union at the United Nations: The Functioning and Coherence of EU External Representation in a State-Centric Environment*, Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff, vol. 1, 2008.

⁸ Declarations 13 and 14 on the CFSP state in the clearest terms that the CFSP "will not affect [...] a Member State's membership of the Security Council". Besides, Article 34(2) of the Treaty on the EU, which addresses the coordination of member states' cooperation in international organisations, introduces a noticeable exception when it comes to the UNSC. The objective that EU members of the UNSC 'concert' and 'inform' other member states and the High Representative is much weaker than the obligation they have to 'coordinate' in other fora, since it merely entails information sharing and non-binding exchanges of views.

⁹ R. Gowan, "For the EU at the U.N., Rising Influence but Bad Timing", *World Politics Review*, 28 November 2018.

¹⁰ EU High Representative Mogherini, "EU Annual Briefing at the UNSC", 12 March 2019.

policy and politics and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse".¹¹ First elaborated to describe the impact of decision-making in the European Communities on national public policy, this concept was extended to depict the influence of EU integration on member states' foreign policy by several scholars, including Hill and Wong,¹² Alecu de Flers and Müller,¹³ and Tonra.¹⁴

In the specific context of the UNSC, the incremental emergence of concertation practices between the EU member states' Missions in New York can result from processes of 'horizontal' Europeanisation.¹⁵ These consist indeed in dynamics "of change triggered by [...] the diffusion of ideas and discourses",¹⁶ where "member states learn from one another in terms of information, analysis, and even policy making structures".¹⁷ Such dynamics in the UNSC appear to be especially driven by international forces such as external federators and special relationships, key factors of Europeanisation processes according to Wong and Hill: external federators such as increasing geopolitical adversity in the UNSC can foster Europeanisation, while special relationships including France's and the UK's close working relationship with the US (the 'P3') or other permanent members (the 'P5') can on the contrary hinder the Europeanisation of cooperation practices in New York.¹⁸

Applying the approach of Europeanisation to the UNSC, understood as a microsystem that reflects geopolitical equilibria, offers a promising perspective on the processes that underpin EU cooperation in New York. It complements the relatively limited literature on the issue and the argument of many scholars that EU cooperation in the

¹¹ C. Radaelli, "The Domestic Impact of European Union Public Policy", *Politique européenne*, vol. 1, no. 5, 2002, p. 108.

¹² C. Hill & R. Wong, "Introduction", in C. Hill & R. Wong (eds.), *National and European Foreign Policies: Towards Europeanisation*, London, Routledge, 2011, pp. 1-18.

¹³ N. Alecu de Flers & P. Müller, "Dimensions and mechanisms of the Europeanisation of member state foreign policy", *Journal of European Integration*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2012, pp. 19-35.

¹⁴ K. Jørgensen et al., *The SAGE Handbook of European Foreign Policy*, London, SAGE Publications, 2015, pp. 182-195.

¹⁵ Besides horizontal Europeanisation, authors identify another form of foreign policy Europeanisation: 'vertical' Europeanisation analyses reciprocal influences between EU and national public policy dynamics, in which case change is propelled either by EU member states at the EU level ('up-loading'), or by EU dynamics at the national level ('down-loading').

¹⁶ Radaelli, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ Jørgensen, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ Hill & Wong, *op. cit.*

UNSC remains a sensitive and limited exercise.¹⁹ At the same time, it provides an alternative to controversies surrounding the idea of a single EU seat in the UNSC.²⁰

To assess Europeanisation processes in the UNSC, this study draws upon primary sources – UNSC decisions and public statements – as well as on secondary sources analysing UNSC dynamics.²¹ Such research is challenging, however, for UNSC decisions and its members' statements do not reflect the full extent of its inner workings.²² To draw a more accurate picture of UNSC dynamics, a series of over 40 semi-structured interviews were conducted in New York in December 2018 and March 2019 with Permanent Representatives (PR), Deputy Permanent Representatives (DPR), political coordinators and experts of relevant missions and delegations to the UN. The interviewees include EU Ambassador João Vale de Almeida, Head of the EU Delegation to the UN, one EU diplomat, two US diplomats, and 38 diplomats from 24 EU member states, including all current and recent EU members of the UNSC.²³ To protect the interviewees' anonymity, quotes are not directly attributed but only referred to as originating from the pool of interviewees, except for Ambassador Vale de Almeida.

Based on these interviews, primary and secondary sources, and the analysis of events up until June 2019, when Estonia was elected for the 2020-2021 term in the UNSC, the paper first outlines how the return of geopolitics to the UNSC initiated the strengthening of EU concertation by influencing key drivers of Europeanisation. It has resulted in the construction, diffusion, and to some extent institutionalisation of a series of new and enhanced EU concertation practices in the UNSC, as highlighted in the second part

¹⁹ Scholars have analysed EU cooperation in the UNSC using the principal-agent approach (E. Drieskens, "EU Actorness at the UN Security Council: A Principal-Agent Comparison of the Legal Situation before and after Lisbon", *European Journal of Law Reform*, vol. 10, no. 4, 2018, pp. 599-619), actorness (E. Drieskens, "Walking on Eggshells: Non-Permanent Members Searching for an EU Perspective at the UN Security Council", in S. Biscop, J. Wouters & E. Drieskens (eds.), *Belgium in the UN Security Council*, Antwerp, Intersentia, 2009, pp. 178-181) or empirical approaches (S. Blavoukos & D. Bourantonis, "The EU's Performance in the United Nations Security Council", *Journal of European Integration*, vol. 33, no. 6, 2011, pp. 735-738).

²⁰ "Germany calls for France to give its UN Security Council seat to the EU", *France24*, 28 November 2018.

²¹ See, for instance, D. Malone, S. von Einsiedel & B. Stagno Ugarte, "The UN Security Council in an Age of Great Power Rivalry", *United Nations University Working Paper Series*, no. 4, Bruges, UNU-CRIS, February 2015.

²² Meeting records can be found at <http://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick/meetings/2019>.

²³ L. Sievers & S. Daws, *The Procedure of the UN Security Council*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, 4th edition, pp. 150-152.

of the paper. The paper then stresses in a third part that the Europeanisation of EU concertation in the UNSC remains a situational and incomplete development. That is the reason why, last but not least, the paper identifies recommendations for all EU stakeholders to institutionalise their enhanced concertation practices, and thus complete the cycle of Europeanisation as defined by Radaelli.

The rise of adversity in the Security Council: a new impetus for Europeanisation

In the last decade, the reverberation of geopolitical rivalries in the UNSC has progressively made the ground fertile for enhanced EU concertation by influencing the drivers of Europeanisation identified by Wong and Hill. In addition to strengthening external federators, the return of geopolitics has weakened the special relationships of the EU and its member states in the UNSC, in particular with the US.

The rise of adverse international forces in the UNSC

Following “the three vetoes by Russia and China over Syria in 2010 and 2012”, UNSC dynamics have become increasingly divisive, especially among permanent members.²⁴ As a Security Council Report noted, the “fractured state of Council relations [...] was reflected in the difficulty of obtaining consensus on Council resolutions”, since “the number of vetoed and non-consensus resolutions has been rising for eight years”.²⁵ An analysis of the UNSC in the last three decades suggests a steady increase of vetoes, indeed: while 9 and 14 vetoes were opposed to draft resolutions in the 1990s and 2000s, respectively, Russia, China and the US used their right to veto 20 times in the 2010s.

As indicated in Table 1, vetoes were cast on draft resolutions regarding issues that have traditionally – Palestine, Syria – or more recently – Venezuela, Ukraine, Yemen – divided the UNSC.

²⁴ Security Council Report, “January 2014 Monthly Forecast”, 20 December 2014.

²⁵ Security Council Report, “February 2019 Monthly Forecast”, 31 January 2019.

Table 1: Vetoes by permanent members of the UNSC since 2000

Member	Number of vetoes	Issue and year
Russia	17	Syria: 2011, 2012 (2), 2014, 2016 (2), 2017 (5), 2018 Ukraine: 2014, 2015 Bosnia and Herzegovina: 2015 Yemen: 2018 Venezuela: 2019
China	7	Syria: 2011, 2012 (2), 2014, 2016, 2017 Venezuela: 2019
USA	3	Israel and Palestine: 2011, 2017, 2018
France	0	
UK	0	

Source: UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library²⁶

On the other hand, observers have noted growing “disagreements not only on traditionally divisive issues such as chemical weapons in Syria and Israel/Palestine, but also on some peacekeeping and sanctions mandate renewals”, such as for the UN missions in the Central African Republic and Haiti, whose mandates had always been consensually renewed in the past.²⁷

Depending on the issue at stake, EU members of the UNSC can therefore find it harder to navigate different constellations of like-minded partners to support their positions. EU members of the UNSC have found themselves in disagreement with Russia and China – their traditional opponents in the UNSC – on a series of issues ranging from the respect of Ukraine’s territorial integrity and independence, to the solution to the Syrian civil war and the use of chemical weapons. More surprisingly, however, they have seen their major longstanding partner in the UNSC – the US – grow into an increasingly unreliable partner under Donald Trump’s Presidency, especially when it comes to the Near East and Iran.

Overall, these adverse international forces in the UNSC can act as external federators for EU member states, a key factor of Europeanisation according to Wong and Hill. That is for instance why, in line with the calls by various EU member states’ leaders for

²⁶ The list of vetoes is available on the website of the UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, at <https://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick>.

²⁷ Security Council Report, “February 2019 Monthly Forecast”, 31 January 2019.

stronger EU foreign policy cooperation,²⁸ the EU Ambassador to the UN explained that on-going international dynamics “create a responsibility, a challenge and an opportunity for the European Union on the world stage”.²⁹ At the UN, he said, “we have to assume a greater responsibility as a group, and that is what we are trying to do in the Security Council”.³⁰

The EU and Trump’s America in the UNSC: a weakened special relationship

The EU and its member states’ most significant special relationship in the UNSC – the transatlantic partnership – has undoubtedly weakened in the last couple of years, which can further contribute to the Europeanisation of EU concertation practices in this forum. Indeed, since his election, Donald Trump has gradually introduced a new approach to international cooperation and international peace and security issues,³¹ which departs from his predecessor’s multilateral outlook³² and has clashed with the EU’s approach.³³ That is why, when asked about the impact of Trump’s election, almost all interviewees pointed to the US Administration’s new rhetoric on multilateralism as the major shift they had witnessed in the UNSC, while regretting the lack of consideration by the US for their EU partners’ views. Most EU member state diplomats interviewed for this paper also referred to major differences in positions towards specific international peace and security issues, in particular regarding Iran, the Middle East Peace Process, and thematic issues such as peacekeeping operations, sexual and reproductive health, climate change, and migration.³⁴

²⁸ Présidence de la République Française, “For European Renewal”, 3 March 2019; J. Pieters, “EU unity more important than ever, Dutch PM says”, *NL Times*, 13 June 2018.

²⁹ Interview with Ambassador Vale de Almeida, New York, 3 December 2018.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ This shift ultimately materialised in Donald Trump’s ‘America First’ National Security Strategy of December 2017 (White House, *National Security Strategy*, Washington, D.C., December 2017, p. I) and his second speech to the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2018.

³² Barack Obama had underlined in his own National Security Strategy his attachment to a “rules-based international order advanced by US leadership”. See White House, “National Security Strategy”, Washington, D.C., February 2015, p. 2.

³³ European Parliament, “The 2016 elections in the US: Effects on the EU-US relationship”, Brussels, 2017, pp. 1, 6-8.

³⁴ Regarding Iran, the US withdrew from the EU-facilitated Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and reinstated sanctions against Iran in August 2018, a move opposed by the EU and its member states. As for the Middle East Peace Process, the Trump Administration moved the US Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem in May 2018. The EU, on the other hand, continues to promote the two-state solution.

Although all European interviewees, including EU Ambassador Vale de Almeida, resorted to a variety of euphemisms to describe the state of the relationship, EU members of the UNSC appear to be increasingly lonely to advance their positions and their attachment to the multilateral “rules-based global order”, now that they are faced with the unprecedented unreliability of their traditional partner in this forum.³⁵

It is especially true for the French and the British, whose day-to-day working relationship with the US in the UNSC has weakened. An EU member state diplomat underlined that the ‘sacrosanct P3’, which had been at the core of UNSC dynamics in the 1990s and 2000s, was now disappearing on several files. This lessening of P3 coordination can be interpreted as an occurrence of the weakening of special relationships in the UNSC, which can foster Europeanisation processes according to Wong and Hill. As pointed out by an EU member state diplomat who returned to New York after a first experience in the 2000s, the fragmentation of the P3 undoubtedly brought EU members closer together.³⁶

In a nutshell, these volatile international dynamics have made the ground fertile for EU members of the UNSC to cooperate more closely, as they acted as an external federator and weakened longstanding special relationships in New York. In this environment conducive to Europeanisation, EU member states strengthened their concertation practices, as will be shown in the following section.

Europeanisation processes in the Security Council

Using Radaelli’s definition of Europeanisation, one can identify the occurrence of Europeanisation processes in the UNSC at two levels. While the first subpart stresses that all interviewees noted a significant improvement in procedures that had previously been institutionalised, the second one elaborates on new practices that have been constructed and diffused by the EU member states’ Missions to the UN in the last couple of years, thus initiating new cycles of Europeanisation. A third subpart then focuses on the creation of the EU8 format, a shining example of Europeanisation dynamics in the UNSC.

³⁵ EU High Representative, “Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign And Security Policy”, Brussels, June 2016.

³⁶ Interviews with EU member state diplomats, New York, 6-29 March 2019.

The recent improvement of institutionalised EU concertation practices

The EU member states' Missions in New York have been cooperating for years through well-established and institutionalised practices based on Article 34 TEU (Article 19 TEU in the pre-Lisbon setup).³⁷ These practices have noticeably improved in the last couple of years according to most interviewees, which consolidates past Europeanisation processes in the UNSC.

The first practice consists in expert-level debriefings following UNSC consultations – regular meetings held behind closed doors to discuss sensitive issues and forge a consensus. Following these meetings, an expert of one of the member states usually joins the EU colleagues at the exit of the UNSC to brief them on what was just discussed. The member state whose expert is to deliver the debriefing is designated for a month on a rotating basis among serving EU members of the UNSC, and nicknamed the 'briefer of the month'. Most interviewees recognised that the value of this practice depends on the identity of the briefer and the issue at stake. Some experts are reluctant to share information and do not always name specific UNSC members when detailing discussions held behind closed doors. However, many noted significant progress towards transparency over the last few years, including from the part of France and the UK.

Evidence can also be found at a more senior level. Every Tuesday, Heads of Mission from all EU member states gather for a meeting chaired by the EU Ambassador to the UN. Such meetings aim to discuss the main issues on the agenda of both the UNSC and the General Assembly. In 2015, the Spanish team – then serving in the UNSC – added to this practice the distribution of a written account of the UNSC's work. This practice, which was picked up by all other EU members of the UNSC, helps fostering transparency in the long term. Overall, interviewees think that the Heads of Mission meetings have become key moments to discuss the EU's strategy in the UNSC, as they adopt a more forward-looking approach. According to an EU member state diplomat with experience in New York in the 2000s, these have "very much improved over the years", and tend to move from information sharing to full-fledged concertation.³⁸

³⁷ Drieskens, *op. cit.*

³⁸ Interviews with EU member state diplomats, New York, 6-29 March 2019.

Finally, following a Spanish-French non-paper in 2000, the EU member states' Missions in New York established weekly meetings that were named after former Article 19 TEU (now Article 34 TEU). These meetings, chaired by the EU Delegation's political coordinator, have become the most important and structured practice in terms of EU concertation on UNSC issues: every week, the briefers of the month, alongside other EU member states serving in the UNSC, "inform their EU colleagues about the ins and outs".³⁹ As Drieskens wrote in 2009, "these weekly moments were a great improvement on the *status quo*" and "have evolved favourably".⁴⁰ However, she noted that "they remain limited to the sharing of information, rather than leading to coordination".⁴¹ In her view, "the setting has reached its limits", for all attendees come with "different expectations [...] different needs (in terms of information), different (foreign policy) interests and perspectives (on EU integration)".⁴²

Ten years after Drieskens's analysis, the interviewees for this paper confirmed that most EU member state diplomats deeply "enjoyed" the format.⁴³ In their view, "experts are more intent to share" than Heads of Mission, and the meetings allow for "more in-depth analysis of what happens" in the UNSC.⁴⁴ Interviewees also confirmed that not all delegates come with similar expectations. On the one hand, debriefings are "extremely useful" for smaller member states, whose delegates "cannot cover everything" and attend all post-consultations debriefings.⁴⁵ On the other hand, larger EU members often find the information provided redundant. They call for more interaction, forward-looking discussions and more inside information. Nevertheless, several diplomats with previous experience of the meetings in the 2000s or the 2010s noted a "huge difference": meetings are longer and there are more exchanges.⁴⁶ In the last two years, attendance has also significantly improved, and political coordinators of EU members of the UNSC complement the briefer's debriefing. Although there still is room for improvement, the format had not "reached its limits" as predicted by Drieskens: on the contrary, "Article 34 is starting to pay off" thanks to processes of "European socialisation", one interviewee argued.⁴⁷

³⁹ Drieskens, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Interviews with EU member state diplomats, New York, 6-29 March 2019.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

The EU Delegation to the UN – established following the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) by a Council Decision in 2010 – has been crucial in supporting stronger concertation practices on UNSC issues.⁴⁸ While acknowledging how difficult the Delegation's task is, a majority of interviewees lauded its professionalism, competence and efficiency, and noted significant improvements under the leadership of Guillaume Dabouis, Head of the Delegation's Political Affairs and Security Council Section, and João Vale de Almeida, the EU Ambassador to the UN. Building on his career in the EU institutions (Director General for External Relations at the Commission, Chief of Staff of the Commission President, EU Ambassador to the US), the latter has, for instance, propelled a new dynamic into the EU Delegation since his arrival in October 2015: mentioning concertation in the UNSC, he said explicitly that he had made it one of his 'signature projects' since the beginning of 2018.⁴⁹

Since its creation, the EU Delegation secured two important roles. First, it has provided EU member states with a forum for transparency, which favours the quick dissemination of information. Diplomats from smaller Missions appreciate in particular the role the Delegation plays in making sure the whole membership receives information and deliverables on UNSC issues (reports on Article 34 meetings, draft resolutions, etc.) through an online platform called *Agora*. Interviewees also viewed positively efforts by the Delegation to provide information from other EU Delegations, especially when their own foreign services are not represented on the ground. Diplomats from EU members of the UNSC, on the other hand, value the Delegation's role as a facilitator. They appreciate receiving inputs from the Delegation for their statements: EU agreed language, statements by the High Representative, Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) and the Political and Security Committee (PSC). The second role of the Delegation is to bring the EU's voice into the UNSC, through statements by the EU Ambassador or senior officials. Overall, the EU Delegation "does the necessary to have the work flowing", one interviewee said, which sustains the strengthening of Europeanisation processes in the UNSC.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Council Decision 2010/427/EU, *Official Journal of the EU*, L201, Brussels, 2010, pp. 30-40.

⁴⁹ Interview with Ambassador Vale de Almeida, New York, 3 December 2018.

⁵⁰ Interviews with EU member state diplomats, New York, 6-29 March 2019.

The construction and diffusion of new EU concertation practices in the UNSC

The construction and diffusion of new concertation practices also show the initiation of novel Europeanisation processes in the UNSC, although they have not been consistently institutionalised yet. On the one hand, members of the UNSC have increased their day-to-day concertation. Prior to negotiations or meetings, EU members share their positions, speaking points and/or drafts, to make sure their positions are aligned and to create synergies. These meetings have become real “inspirational exchanges of view” in the words of one diplomat, which favour the coherence of all EU members of the UNSC’s votes and statements.⁵¹ A diplomat with previous experience of concertation in the UNSC explains that cooperation has now reached a “completely different level”.⁵² Exchanges between capitals and regular meetings between Permanent Representatives and political coordinators complement this daily cooperation. The EU Ambassador also hosts quarterly luncheons with his counterparts from EU member states serving in the UNSC, whereas political coordinators join the EU Delegation’s political coordinator for a monthly lunch to go over the programme of the coming month and discuss opportunities for joint initiatives. Capitals further hold bi-annual meetings with their Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Directors for EU and UNSC issues to facilitate dialogue “on core objectives and current UNSC affairs”.⁵³ According to one European diplomat, however, this is “not an actual coordination”, although these informal meetings result in “de facto cooperation”.⁵⁴

On the other hand, elected EU members of the UNSC have developed *ad hoc* cooperation practices.⁵⁵ Since 2017, they have implemented stronger practices of cooperation, starting with the split term of Italy and the Netherlands. As both EU member states received the same amount of votes during the election of new UNSC members on 28 June 2016, they agreed to share their term. Both hoped to “send a message of unity between two European countries” five days after the British decided to leave the EU.⁵⁶ Italy would seat at the table in 2017, and the Netherlands in 2018. In practice, the Netherlands and Italy strengthened their cooperation throughout the

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ The Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, “European cooperation in the UNSC”, 7 December 2018.

⁵⁴ Interviews with EU member state diplomats, New York, 6-29 March 2019.

⁵⁵ The list of EU elected members of the UNSC after 2017 is as follows: Sweden (2017-2018), Italy (2017), the Netherlands (2018), Poland (2018-2019), Belgium and Germany (2019- 2020), Estonia (2020-2021).

⁵⁶ M. Nichols, “Italy, Netherlands propose split UNSC seat for 2017-18”, *Reuters*, 28 June 2016.

two years. While The Hague and Rome exchanged diplomats at capital-level, a Dutch diplomat joined the Italian Mission in New York in 2017. Both Missions exchanged information, in particular through monthly Ambassadorial-level meetings and regular expert gatherings. Overall, the practice proved beneficial as the Missions successfully introduced more resolutions together than elected members seating for two years.

In 2018, the Netherlands, Sweden and Poland further organised regular meetings both in their capitals and in New York. Together, The Hague, Stockholm and Warsaw proceeded to strategic planning, whereas political coordinators and experts in New York met on a regular basis. They also emphasised the passing over of information to their EU successors in the UNSC to ensure continuity for elected members. In an attempt to promote the institutionalisation of these practices, Poland, Sweden and the Netherlands circulated on 7 December 2018 a non-paper entitled “European cooperation in the United Nations Security Council – examples and lessons learned by the elected EU UNSC members in 2018”.⁵⁷

The *jumelage* of the French and German UNSC presidencies in March and April 2019 was yet another example of cooperation. To rejuvenate working methods, promote a stronger European voice, and strengthen their cooperation in the UNSC after the signing of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, they presented a combined work programme for the two months, with Europe at the core of the agenda.⁵⁸ They also exchanged diplomats before Germany’s formal entrance in the UNSC and held closer cooperation on a daily basis. All interviewees valued how symbolical it was to see a permanent member “willing to take some steps back”.⁵⁹ However, several appeared sceptic as to the actual impact of the move, while others warned it should not overshadow other EU members of the UNSC.

The EU8 format: a shining example of Europeanisation processes in the UNSC

Of all the newly emerged practices of concertation in the UNSC, the development of the EU8 format is probably the most visible example. The EU8 format is a caucus of former, current and incoming EU members of the UNSC – currently Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, and the UK. Under this format, EU

⁵⁷ The Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, *op. cit.*

⁵⁸ UN Security Council, “Programme of Work”.

⁵⁹ Interviews with EU member state diplomats, New York, 6-29 March 2019.

member states have constructed the innovative practice of joint press stakeouts, which they diffused into a series of other practices such as high-level meetings. One EU member state diplomat directly linked the emergence of this format to increasing divisions in the UNSC.⁶⁰ In reaction to Trump's decision to move the US Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem in December 2017, the French and the Swedes suggested to their British and Italian counterparts that they organise "a common statement outside of the Council".⁶¹ One of the latter, however, dismissed the idea, arguing that it was instead "something that should be dealt with in Brussels, if it's meant to try to convey the views of (some, not all) EU member states".⁶² At the same time, discussions in Brussels had reached a stalemate and no significant move to condemn the US had been agreed upon.

Following discussions at capital level, all four members eventually agreed to deliver a common statement on 8 December 2017 after an emergency UNSC meeting, and invited Germany to join them at the stakeout.⁶³ The E5 statements were born. However, this event caused uproar both in Brussels and New York, where a group of EU member states vehemently criticised the practice. They complained that a small group of countries address the press as if they were speaking on behalf of the EU, without first consulting with their European partners. They criticised in particular the presence of Germany, since the Germans were not members of the UNSC at the time.

Given the persistence of adverse dynamics in the UNSC following the inauguration of the US Embassy in Jerusalem, the Swedes engaged again with Paris, London, as well as The Hague and Warsaw – represented at the UNSC since January – to organise another joint statement. As France pushed to invite Germany, Sweden suggested to include former and incoming members of the UNSC, namely Italy, Belgium and Germany. On 15 May 2018, the PRs from all eight Delegations spoke in turn – in a so-called EU5+3 format – to deliver a joint statement inspired by High Representative Federica Mogherini's earlier declarations.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Permanent Representatives of France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and the UK, "Joint Statement on the Situation in the Middle East", 8 December 2017.

⁶⁴ Permanent Representatives of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the UK, "Joint Statement Following Security Council Meeting on Gaza", 15 May 2018.

After two other Swedish initiatives, the format was consolidated as an EU8 exercise on 20 September 2018 when the Dutch decided that the briefer of the month alone would read the statement to avoid the awkward choreography of previous exercises.⁶⁵ Subsequently, the EU8 organised several joint stakeouts on a variety of issues.⁶⁶ On various occasions, however, it proved impossible to deliver EU8 statements, due to the absence of a common position in Brussels and the reluctance of some EU8 members to openly criticise the US. EU5 statements were therefore delivered instead.⁶⁷

The EU8 format was then diffused and expanded beyond the stakeout, also due to the endorsement of the High Representative who attended high-level meetings with EU8 Foreign Ministers and PRs both in New York and Brussels.⁶⁸ In general, the practice has been accepted by the EU members. Most interviewees see it as flexible and useful to enhance the EU's credibility and visibility, in addition to offering a 'good picture for social media'.⁶⁹ Some interviewees also noted the role of the EU Delegation in providing agreed language to ease negotiations and accommodate the wider membership. Yet, a few diplomats were still "nervous that a small group of EU countries decides EU policy".⁷⁰ Only one argued that it was not a good practice to create restricted groups who deliver statements "cooked and then circulated with apologies".⁷¹ Overall, other EU member states' scepticism and the resort to EU5 statements whenever the EU8 failed to agree on a common intervention show that the EU8 format has not reached maturity yet.

Contrary to the pre-existing practices described in the first subpart, that had all been sustainably institutionalised in the past, the EU8 format and the other cooperation practices mentioned in the second subpart are yet to undergo the third and last stage of Europeanisation: institutionalisation. As a result, the Europeanisation of EU concertation in the UNSC remains a fragile development, which is all the more

⁶⁵ Permanent Representative of the Netherlands on behalf of the EU8, "Joint Statement on Khan al-Ahmar", 20 September 2018.

⁶⁶ Syria (17 October 2018), Ukraine (30 October 2018 and 12 February 2019), Iran (12 December 2018), Kosovo (17 December 2018), the MEPP (18 December 2018), Venezuela (26 February 2019), Women Peace and Security, and Climate and Security.

⁶⁷ For instance, after the Trump Administration recognised Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, only five EU member states addressed the press to criticise the US decision.

⁶⁸ Security Council Report, "March 2019 Monthly Forecast", 28 February 2019.

⁶⁹ Interviews with EU member state diplomats, New York, 6-29 March 2019.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

uncertain because some obstacles to Europeanisation remain, as outlined in the following section.

The enduring limitations of Europeanisation processes in the Security Council

The resilience of traditional dynamics within the UNSC should not be underestimated. Traditional partnerships continue to prevail, often at the expense of the Europeanisation of EU concertation in the UNSC. News of an extreme erosion of the transatlantic relationship are, for instance, “purely nonsense”, a European diplomat argued, in particular thanks to US Ambassador Nikki Haley’s ability to “translate general foreign policy coming from DC”.⁷² Despite the relative weakening of the P3, France and the UK therefore continue to engage in priority with the US, which is why an EU member state diplomat concluded that “P3 coordination continues to trump EU coordination”.⁷³ Transatlantic cooperation is also still important for elected EU members. As Americans do not see the EU as a relevant actor on peace and security, they tend to approach individual member states that they consider as reliable partners, like the Poles, who in February 2019 co-hosted with the US a conference on Middle East peace and security.

In this context, the weakness of EU foreign policy and the difficulties to reach consensus continue to hinder European cooperation, as showed by the failure to deliver a joint EU8 statement on the status of the Golan Heights. Indeed, EU members still operate solely in their national capacity in the UNSC in line with Article 34 TEU, and the difference of status between EU permanent and elected members adds to this phenomenon.⁷⁴ EU permanent members often nurture their independence in the UNSC and are not as helpful or willing to share information as EU elected members. Based on their experience, their role as penholders, and their extensive institutional memory, they can also take more initiatives than elected members and adopt a long-term perspective.⁷⁵ Therefore, they are more reluctant to initiate cooperation with their elected counterparts, even if they play along when these take an initiative: they “always take, never give”, one interviewee said.⁷⁶ Elected EU members, on the other hand, often come to the UNSC with high expectations and the “ambition of giving

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Keukeleire & Delreux, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

⁷⁵ Sievers & Daws, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁷⁶ Interviews with EU member state diplomats, New York, 6-29 March 2019.

their memberships a European dimension", but are faced with a lack of resources and institutional memory, as well as with the burden of subsidiary and sanctions committees chairmanships.⁷⁷

Besides, the current deepening of EU concertation in the UNSC is dependent on situational developments such as the turnover of EU members in this body. The presence of five EU member states in the UNSC in 2017 and 2018 – a third of UNSC membership – was an exceptional situation, which created an unprecedented opportunity to enhance cooperation.⁷⁸ However, numbers could go down to one by 2022. Poland will be replaced by Estonia in 2020, but an EU country is yet to announce a bid for a mandate starting in 2022. It is not certain either that Belgium and Germany will be replaced by an EU member state, since Ireland will run against Canada and Norway, two strong candidates. In the absence of EU coordination on elections, France could after Brexit be the only EU member of the UNSC in 2022. Only in 2023 will Malta potentially join the table, followed by Denmark and/or Greece in 2025.

The national identity of elected members – a factor of Europeanisation according to Wong and Hill – also plays an important role in Europeanisation processes in the UNSC. In this regard, an overwhelming majority of interviewees depicted Sweden and the Netherlands as deeply European members.⁷⁹ In a "Parliamentary letter on the Netherlands' upcoming non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council", the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and Development pledged on 27 October 2017 that Europeanisation would be a key feature of the Dutch UNSC membership.⁸⁰ As a result, they made transparency in the UNSC one of their priorities: they would share early on information with their EU counterparts and directly attribute quotes to UNSC members post-consultations debriefings. The Dutch Mission also integrated Europeanisation into standard working procedures: while drafting statements, experts were asked to systematically reflect on opportunities for Europeanisation. Poland was described as a European member of the UNSC, despite the Eurosceptic views of the current Polish government, and Belgium is also seen as a

⁷⁷ Drieskens, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

⁷⁸ Up to four EU member states can join France and the UK at the table, as they are scattered through the Eastern European, the Western European and Others, and the Asia-Pacific regional groups, which are used for the election of the UNSC's ten non-permanent members.

⁷⁹ Interviews with EU member state diplomats, New York, 6-29 March 2019.

⁸⁰ Dutch Government, "Letter on the Netherlands' Upcoming Non-Permanent Membership of the UN Security Council", 27 October 2017, p. 3.

convinced pro-European member. Germany adopts a more ambivalent posture: despite its ambition to strengthen the EU's voice in the UNSC, it acts as a "quasi P6 member", one interviewee argued.⁸¹

The turnover of elected EU members comes with a turnover in experts in the UNSC. Analysing the Belgian membership of the UNSC in 2007-2008, Drieskens underlined that it was a "missed opportunity that most members of the Belgian UNSC team will be transferred back to their capital".⁸² The fact that serving in the UNSC is often a once in a career opportunity for most diplomats breaks socialisation experiences that drive Europeanisation. Discontinuity is therefore a major challenge to EU cooperation in the UNSC.

In this regard, Brexit appears as yet another cause of disruption. Following the decision made by the British to leave the EU in June 2016, the UK was initially scheduled to leave the Union on 29 March 2019 – a deadline extended to 31 October. In any case, the UK and the EU have reiterated their willingness to closely cooperate on foreign policy, including in the UNSC, as evidenced in the draft Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship.⁸³ It remains unclear how such cooperation will be operationalised in New York, but most interviewees agreed that, in the short term, Brexit would have a limited impact on European cooperation in the UNSC. One argued that Brexit is a "change in membership, not policies": the British, within or outside of the EU, are said to share the same values and interests than most of their EU counterparts.⁸⁴ However, approximately half of the interviewees assumed that the UK will demonstrate more independence *vis-à-vis* their EU partners in the UNSC, and move farther towards the US.⁸⁵ Others believed that the British will not necessarily drift towards their American allies, although it would have been a "natural consequence had it not been for the Trump Administration".⁸⁶ One EU member state diplomat even noticed that it has had the opposite effect so far: British diplomats appear more forthcoming and keen on building networks.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Interviews with EU member state diplomats, New York, 6-29 March 2019.

⁸² Drieskens, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-184.

⁸³ Council of the EU, "Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the EU and the United Kingdom", Brussels, 22 November 2018, pp. 24-25.

⁸⁴ Interviews with EU member state diplomats, New York, 6-29 March 2019.

⁸⁵ M. Dee & K. Smith, "UK Diplomacy at the UN after Brexit: Challenges and Opportunities", *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2017, p. 529.

⁸⁶ Interviews with EU member state diplomats, New York, 6-29 March 2019.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

In any case, Brexit adds uncertainty to the future of Europeanisation processes in the UNSC. The persistence of special transatlantic relationships in the UNSC, the turnover of EU member states at the table, and their changing national priorities continue to question the sustainability of incomplete Europeanisation processes in the UNSC. That is why the last part of this paper identifies a set of recommendations to institutionalise emerging practices, and sustain the Europeanisation of EU concertation in the UNSC.

How to sustain the Europeanisation of EU concertation in the Security Council

Only proactive investment of all EU stakeholders can help them make the most of the current enabling environment to institutionalise Europeanisation processes in the UNSC. To this end, this paper identifies a set of pragmatic policy recommendations, to which one ought to add a preliminary recommendation: EU member states should step up their cooperation when it comes to UNSC elections, in order to avoid conflicting campaigns and rally behind their counterparts' bids.

The other recommendations set out in this part are divided into five key approaches, from those involving the fewest stakeholders to those associating institutions both in New York and Brussels: systematising exchanges of views between EU members of the UNSC, institutionalising the EU8 format, ensuring knowledge-management to mitigate the turnover of EU elected members of the UNSC, energising discussions with the wider EU membership, and increasing links between Brussels and New York.

Towards systematic exchanges of views between EU members of the UNSC

Exchanges of views are key to ensure cooperation between EU member states serving in the UNSC. The Polish-Dutch-Swedish non-paper suggests, for instance, "regular dialogue [...] both in New York and between capitals".⁸⁸ Building on Dutch propositions, this cooperation should focus on four levels: "notification (sharing our own initiatives at an early stage); mobilisation (asking for help in lobbying other Security Council members for their support); consultation (e.g. offering substantive input) and implementation (together with the EU, following up on decisions and appeals by the

⁸⁸ The Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

Security Council)".⁸⁹ Concretely, such cooperation should be translated both into formal and informal gatherings at different levels.

As suggested by an EU member state diplomat, formal meetings benefit from substantive exchanges of views on a more strategic level:

- In this regard, the formalisation of bi-annual EU-UNSC Directors' meetings, quarterly luncheons hosted by the EU Ambassador, and monthly political coordinators' meetings were positive developments. The latter could be established on a bi-weekly basis to foster exchanges between PCs.
- Some interviewees also noted that strategic discussions at the level of Heads or Deputy Heads of Mission with the EU Ambassador could be further explored to identify opportunities for joint action and communicate on individual initiatives.⁹⁰ Those ought to lead to concrete written outcomes, such as monthly, quarterly and/or annual strategic plans of action, written by the briefer of the month or the EU Delegation.
- Another format could associate the UNSC teams of all EU members serving in the UNSC, for instance in the framework of a joint annual or bi-annual seminar or joint retreat. The EU Delegation, which already organises such gatherings on an annual basis, could facilitate these.
- Additional formal practices could consist of exchanges of diplomats, following the French-German and Dutch-Italian examples. Promoting such exchanges is key to guaranteeing mutual understanding, and establishes constant channels of communication, although language differences might prove challenging.

Constant informal exchanges are also valuable to promote socialisation processes between experts:

- In the framework of negotiations or ahead of UNSC meetings, experts should consider more systematic and early exchanges of draft statements, lines to take and positions. Division of labour and work in joint teams was also suggested by a European diplomat. Meetings of groups of friends or other formats ought to include experts from the EU Delegation on a more regular basis.

⁸⁹ Dutch Government, *op. cit.*

⁹⁰ The Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, *op. cit.*

- On the other hand, experts of the EU Delegation should provide more timely input in terms of EU-agreed language, interests and positions, so that experts can consider them early in their work on statements or positions.

Towards result-oriented practices: the institutionalisation of the EU8 format

As explained by a diplomat, discussions need to lead to “operational outcomes”, instead of turning into fruitless exchanges.⁹¹ Result-oriented and pragmatic cooperation is therefore needed to sustain regular dialogue. The example of joint EU8 statements is key to this idea, although after its construction and diffusion last year, the practice now needs to be institutionalised:

- EU members should associate incoming and former members of the UNSC to the largest extent possible. As of now, the EU5 format – with current members of the UNSC – supersedes the EU8 format depending on the issue at stake. Members who left the UNSC in January should be associated for a year after they leave the table. In the eventuality that France is the only EU member in 2022, it would include a higher number of EU states. After Brexit, it could become the EUX+1 format, depending on the number of EU member states involved in discussions. A non-paper could set out the format for the sake of predictability.
- To enable consensus, the EU8 should decide to deliver statements on issues where common positions have been established in Brussels (e.g. FAC conclusions, High Representative statements). Indeed, negotiations risk failing or be less inclusive on issues on which there is no consensus in Brussels (e.g. the Middle East Peace Process).
- Finally, statements should be delivered in particular on issues of strong interest for the EU (e.g. specific EU interests or when in opposition with a major player like the US). The practice should not be overused, to avoid the risk of displaying EU overrepresentation and of turning it into a trivial exercise.

Towards continuity and knowledge-management among elected EU members

“Ensuring that valuable knowledge is preserved among elected EU UNSC members” is a key recommendation of the Polish-Dutch-Swedish non-paper.⁹² Since newly elected

⁹¹ Interviews with EU member state diplomats, New York, 6-29 March 2019.

⁹² The Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, *op. cit.*

Estonia and campaigning member states have smaller Missions (Ireland, Malta) in New York, such practices will prove crucial in the years to come.

- Cooperation between incoming and current members of the UNSC is extremely positive. They should promote exchanges of diplomats, best practices and information at an early stage, at least six months ahead of the start of their term. The practice should extend beyond the beginning of the term, with former members assisting new members, and the latter pursuing initiatives of their predecessors in the UNSC. A troika format could associate former, current and incoming elected members.
- According to an interviewee, the Dutch drafted a handbook for incoming EU members of the UNSC.⁹³ It should be widely circulated and regularly complemented by other members serving in the UNSC. The Dutch exercise offers a good basis to develop a consolidated guide for incoming members.
- Finally, the EU Delegation could assist EU member states in their transition to the UNSC. One European diplomat suggested, for example, that the EU Delegation builds up a team made of seconded national experts coming from former EU members of the UNSC to assist incoming members on sanctions committee work.⁹⁴

Towards inclusive and dynamic exchanges with the wider EU membership

Cooperation on UNSC issues should also extend to the wider EU membership, by energising and rationalising exchanges between members and non-members of the UNSC.

- Weekly Heads of Mission meetings should be the focus of forward-looking discussions with the wider EU membership on UNSC issues and cooperation prospects. High-level representation and the fact that they take place early in the week make them the proper place for strategic thinking. The briefer of the month, in addition to circulating a written account of the UNSC's work in the past week, could open the floor to suggestions on a more regular basis. It is also not necessary to provide extensive debriefings in such meetings to avoid redundancies with Article 34 meetings.
- Article 34 meetings, on the other hand, should go more into depth on the issues discussed. In recent practice, most EU members of the UNSC jump in the discussion, which makes it more interactive and transparent. As chair of the meeting, the EU

⁹³ Interviews with EU member state diplomats, New York, 6-29 March 2019.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Delegation's political coordinator should continue to invite all political coordinators of UNSC members to add elements to the briefer of the month's account. Highlighting one or two specific points of interest on the agenda would also enable experts from smaller Delegations to prepare in advance. Meetings could further build to a greater extent on the experience of Troop Contributing Countries or member states with specific geographical interests (e.g. Spain in Latin America). The EU Delegation could also consider organising voluntary side-meetings with non-serving EU members to elaborate on the issues at stake, to the extent possible given constraints on time and resources.

- The EU Delegation ought to facilitate informal discussions beyond the formal formats of Article 34 and Heads of Mission meetings, by hosting luncheons or informal meetings on a monthly basis. "What is missing are informal and free flowing discussions and normal human interaction", a diplomat said.⁹⁵

Towards more systematic linkages between Brussels and New York

An overwhelming majority of interviewees recognised that communication between Brussels and New York was insufficiently developed. Although the same issues are discussed on both sides of the Atlantic, there are few synergies and little mutual understanding, and the pace is much faster in the UNSC than in the working groups and committees of the EU Council of Ministers. Improving inter-linkages, communication and mutual understanding would benefit the timeliness and the coherence of the EU's response to peace and security issues.

- Discussions in the UNSC on the hand, and the PSC and other relevant working groups, such as the United Nations Working Party (CONUN), need, on the other hand, to be further synchronised. To do so, the PSC should be regularly briefed on discussions in New York. Specific PSC or CONUN meetings could also be dedicated to UNSC issues on a bi-annual basis. In New York, the EU Delegation briefs EU member states on FAC and PSC conclusions. The French proposed in December 2018 that EU members of the UNSC meet to discuss the way forward following FAC meetings, but the initiative has not been implemented yet.
- Member states should improve channels of communication between New York and Brussels or make sure information is circulated in a timely manner. Those member states that rely on a vertical model – where information is processed in capitals before being redirected to relevant embassies – should encourage

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

horizontal cooperation between Permanent Representations in New York and Brussels. The EU Delegation in New York could also act as a key focal point, but awareness should be raised in Brussels regarding the importance of timely exchanges for UNSC issues.

Conclusion: adversity, a chance to turn the UNSC table in the EU's favour

This paper investigated how the resurgence of geopolitical adversity has impacted EU concertation in the UNSC. To answer this question, it resorted to the concept of Europeanisation, to show how the return of geopolitics on the world stage has impacted the UNSC and EU dynamics within this forum. The rise of adverse international forces coincided with an increase in divisions in the UNSC, which has especially affected France, the UK and other elected EU members' special relationship with the United States under the Trump Administration. The reverberation of international tensions in the UNSC has therefore made the ground fertile for Europeanisation processes, as evidenced by the strengthening of pre-existing institutionalised concertation and the construction and diffusion of new European cooperation formats, such as the EU8 and other *ad hoc* initiatives.

Nevertheless, the Europeanisation of EU concertation in the UNSC remains an incomplete process due to the lack of institutionalisation of most recent developments. It is further constrained by enduring structural limits to EU cooperation, including EU permanent and elected members' preferences for bilateral cooperation formats with other partners such as the US. Given their dependence on the turnover of EU member states in the UNSC and on the odds of the Brexit process, Europeanisation processes at work in the UNSC are also situational. As a result, the return of geopolitics has opened a situational 'window of opportunity' for stronger EU concertation, which all stakeholders should explore while European political equilibria remain conducive to new foreign policy experiments. The EU and its member states should therefore make the most of the unique set of circumstances that currently favour their cooperation in New York. To this end, this paper identified a set of policy recommendations, all of which would be feasible under the EU's current institutional and legal arrangements. Altogether, they aim to systematise exchanges of views between EU members of the UNSC, promote continuity between EU elected members, boost cooperation with the wider EU membership, and strengthen the links between New York and Brussels. Prompt and decisive action is now key to make sure that the

EU seizes this 'window of opportunity', which is bound to remain limited both in time and amplitude.

Sievers and Daws wrote that the UNSC is a constantly "moving target", and undoubtedly, developments described in this paper will continue to evolve.⁹⁶ Aside from adversity, Brexit, the Trump Administration and global geopolitical dynamics have opened a new era of uncertainty for the EU, both at home and abroad. In this context, this research only offers a partial snapshot of complex phenomena, in the hope that others will further analyse the impact of Brexit and other unforeseen developments in world or EU politics on UNSC dynamics. A parallel analysis of the influence of the return of geopolitics on the EU's action in the UN General Assembly could bring more perspective to the evolution of EU dynamics in international organisations. Surprisingly, some interviewees pointed to an opposite trend in the UNGA: whereas EU concertation in the UNSC had often been presented as lagging behind in comparison to EU unity in the UNGA, the rise of adversity in world affairs now seems to hamper EU cooperation in the UNGA. Adversity does not always come with unity.

⁹⁶ Sievers & Daws, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

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